

HTS 3026
Sociology of Race & Ethnicity
Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Calvin Zimmermann

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Race is often thought of as a biological characteristic of individuals. Yet research consistently demonstrates that race, rather than a biological reality, is a social reality. In other words, race is socially constructed. This course will introduce you to how to think sociologically about race and ethnicity. We will explore the origins of the idea of race and the theoretical and empirical analysis of race, ethnicity, and immigration. We will also examine patterns and mechanisms of racial/ethnic inequalities in a variety of social domains including education, income, wealth, and health. Throughout the course we will view race through an intersectional lens, emphasizing the interplay between social categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, and social class. We will also discuss immigration patterns and how they affect racial and ethnic relations. While we will talk about historical and global processes and patterns, most of the class will focus on racial and ethnic stratification in contemporary U.S. society (post-1960s).

COURSE GOALS:

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course directs students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course will help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Have a research-based understanding of how race influences both our personal lives and the broader society
- Understand the diverse ways in which social scientists study race and ethnicity
- Identify the strengths and limitations of social scientific theories and research
- Develop your ability to connect social theories to contemporary real-world issues in race, ethnicity, and immigration
- Be able to compare and contrast institutional, organizational, structural, and systemic theories of race
- Be able to describe the salience of race across a variety of social institutions
- Further develop your ability to critically analyze, produce, and present academic writing

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

None

COURSE MATERIALS REQUIRED TO BE PURCHASED:

Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2022. *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach*. Brief 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press.

You can purchase the book from the Georgia Tech bookstore [here](#). Used Rental: \$38; Used Buy: \$57

ADDITIONAL COURSE READINGS:

The following readings are available on Canvas.

Zarrugh, A., and L. Romero. 2023. "Genetic Racialization: Ancestry Tests and the Reification of Race." *Social Problems*.

Golash-Boza, T. 2016. "A Critical and Comprehensive Sociological Theory of Race and Racism." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2(2): 129-141.

Bonilla-Silva, E. 2021. "What Makes Systemic Racism Systemic?" *Sociological Inquiry* 91: 513-533.

Douglas, K. M., R. Sáenz, & A. L. Murga. 2015. "Immigration in the Era of Color-Blind Racism." *American Behavioral Scientist*. 59(11): 1429-1451.

Craig, Maureen., and Jennifer A. Richardson. 2014. "More Diverse Yet Less Tolerant? How the Increasingly Diverse Racial Landscape Affects White Americans' Racial Attitudes." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 40(6): 750-761.

Outten, H.R., M.T. Schmitt, D.A. Miller, and A.L. Garcia. 2012. "Feeling Threatened About the Future: Whites' Emotional Reactions to Anticipated Ethnic Demographic Changes." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38(1): 14-25.

Danbold, F. and Y. J. Huo. 2014. "No Longer "All-American"? Whites' Defensive Reactions to Their Numerical Decline." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 6(2): 210-218.

Dhingra, P.. 2021. "Over-zealous Parents, Over-programmed Families": Asian Americans, Academic Achievement, and White Supremacy." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*.

Zimmermann, C.. 2024. "Looking for Trouble: How Teachers' Racialized Practices Perpetuate Discipline Disparities in Early Childhood." *Sociology of Education*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation. Note that attendance (7.5%) and participation (7.5%) are a substantial part of your grade. Attendance is required and will be recorded each class period. I will allow two unexcused absences. All other absences must be formally excused by Georgia Tech and documented. After that, each unexcused absence will result in minus 2.5% for your final attendance. You are responsible for any content that you miss.

You are also expected to participate in daily class discussions and small-group activities. Please note that this class is based on a discussion-style rather than solely a lecture-style. The course will have a mix of lecture, small-group discussions, entire group discussions, in-class activities, and brief individual writing assignments where you will be expected to respond to a question. This will, potentially, allow me to randomly call on all students for discussion of course materials and ideas. At the beginning of the semester, I will discuss the various ways that students may participate including, but not limited to, asking questions, responding to discussion questions, and being an active participant in small-group activities/discussions.

Synthesis Papers. Synthesis papers are a chance for students to demonstrate their understanding of interrelated ideas, concepts, and theories from course materials. Students will also apply ideas learned in class to suggest potential solutions to real world issues related to race and ethnicity. Students will respond to a prompt provided by the professor on Canvas. These papers should be 4-5 pages (double-spaced, 11-12pt font; 1-inch margins) in length and also include in-text citations and a bibliography. **Only citations of materials from class will be allowed. No external references are allowed for these papers.** Students will complete a total of three synthesis papers during the semester.

Research Proposal and Final Paper. There is one short (4-5 pages; double-spaced, 11-12pt font; 1-inch margins) research proposal and one longer (10-12 pages) research paper on a topic related to race and ethnicity that is chosen by the student. The research proposal is designed to get students working on their final paper early in the semester. It also allows students to get feedback on their chosen topic as they develop the final paper.

The final paper builds upon the research proposal, incorporating the professor's feedback and making the necessary revisions and extensions. Your research topic must be a topic that we are not discussing in class and it must be approved by me (verbally or via email) prior to the research proposal due date. I often suggest that students choose a research topic that is related to their career or personal interests. I am happy to work with you to develop a focused research question on your topic. There is an outline on Canvas but I will also go over the requirements for the research proposal and final paper closer to the due date. Feel free to schedule a time to meet with me before then.

Useful guide: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal>

Research Presentation. You are expected to complete an 8-minute in-class presentation on your research paper. The presentation should follow a formal social science presentation format. I will discuss the expectations for this presentation as we get closer to the end of the semester. You can also find a guide on Canvas.

GRADING POLICY:

Below is how your final grade will be computed.

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|-------------------------------|------|
| ● Attendance | 7.5% |
| ● Participation | 7.5% |
| ● Synthesis Papers | 25% |
| ● Research Proposal | 15% |
| ● Research Paper Presentation | 15% |
| ● Research Paper | 30% |

90% and above = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

Less than 60% = F

Late assignments: The policy for late assignments is that you will need a documented health, funeral, or university sponsored excuse for turning in late assignments at full credit. Assignments turned in after their due dates without a documented excuse will receive a drop in letter grade every two days beyond their due date.

Academic Integrity: Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust,

academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Use of AI Tools (e.g., ChatGPT)

Generative AI tools like ChatGPT are widely accessible and increasingly used for writing support, brainstorming, and information retrieval. In this course, we will recognize the reality of these tools while prioritizing your development as an independent thinker, reader, and writer.

You may use generative AI tools in the following limited ways:

- Brainstorming research questions or paper topics
- Generating possible keywords or search terms for databases
- Outlining or organizing ideas in the early stages
- Asking clarifying questions about course readings or sociological concepts

You should still critically evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of AI-generated content. These tools are known to produce misleading, incorrect, or biased information, **especially on topics related to race and ethnicity.**

You may not use AI tools to:

- Generate full or partial drafts of course papers

- Summarize or synthesize academic sources (AI-generated summaries may be inaccurate)
- Paraphrase or rewrite content to avoid plagiarism
- Bypass required readings, podcasts, videos, or lectures

Using AI in these ways undermines your learning and violates the academic integrity expectations of this course (see the above policy).

Use of AI Disclosure Requirement

If you use any AI tool in your research or writing process (even in the permitted ways), you must include a **short AI Use Statement** at the end of your assignment.

For example: “I used ChatGPT to brainstorm potential research questions. I did not use it to generate or revise any part of the written assignment.”

Failure to disclose use of AI tools, or use of AI in prohibited ways, may be treated as a violation of the university’s academic integrity policy.

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions

Classes and class recordings may not be recorded or distributed by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is according to accommodations granted by the Office of Disability Services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course. Students may not record or share the materials or recordings, including screen capturing or automated bots, unless the instructor gives permission.

***This syllabus serves as a guide for the course. Changes may be necessary.**